REMARKS

Claims 1, 5-7, 12, 13, 16, and 17 are pending after the amendments.

Dependent Claims 2, 3, and 4 have been merged into Claim 1. Claim 7 has been made independent by merging various limitations from Claim 1 into Claim 7. Claim 7 has also been made clearer.

Support for the amendments to Claim 1 is found in the original claims, on page 14, lines 7-13, and in Fig. 5 step 90. Support for the amendments to Claim 7 is found in the original claims, on page 14, lines 13-17, and in Fig. 5 step 90.

In **Claim 1**, the bonus round is a tournament played by multiple players on a plurality of eligible gaming machines at the same time playing free bonus games initiated by a bonus round initiation signal. The players obtain base awards during the bonus games. At the end of the bonus round, at least the winning player gets her bonus awards multiplied by a factor that "is based on a number of players playing the bonus games." Therefore, the winning player that has won against many other players receives a higher multiple than a player that has won against fewer players. This is justified because it is harder to win against a greater number of players, so the multiplied award reflects this added difficulty.

Since Claim 1 is a merger of Claims 1, 2, 3, and 4, where Claim 4 recited the limitation of "determining the multiplier based on a number of players playing the bonus games," the rejection of Claim 4 is the most pertinent rejection.

The examiner rejected Claims 4-6 as being obvious over Webb (US 2003/0060265) and Cannon (US 2004/0106446) in view of Riendeau (US 2002/0082071).

The examiner cites **Webb and Cannon** for their combined suggestion of bonus games played by a plurality of players. It is conceded that slot machine tournaments in casinos are prior art. In such prior art tournaments, the winning player typically receives a predetermined prize, where the value of the prize is not a "base award" multiplied by a multiplier based on the number of players that competed in the tournament.

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The examiner relies on **Riendeau** for teaching an award multiplier. Riendeau describes an electronic game (see Fig. 1), such as an on-line game, that can be played by a few players at the same time (para. 0025). Each player pays the same entrance fee to play the game, such as by using a credit card (para. 0026). Each player takes a turn in selecting branches along a path on the same game board (paras. 007, 0029). Each player accumulates prizes based on the nodes of the branches selected (para. 007). When a finishing point is reached, each player's accumulated prizes are awarded to that player (paras. 007, 0030).

Prior to the start of the game, once all players are identified that will play the same game, the Riendeau game server selects a game board (ticket) whose possible prizes are a multiple of the number of players playing (para. 0026). Paragraph 0026, relied on by the examiner, states that the "prize value of the ticket is multiplied by the number of players participating in the game room." The examiner relies on this multiplication of the various prizes at the nodes on the game ticket for his rejection of Applicant's Claim 4, now Claim 1.

The reason why Riendeau's game server must select a game ticket with multiplied prize amounts is that fewer prizes, on average, will be won by each player as more and more players share the same game ticket. Therefore, to keep the average prize constant per player (to justify the entrance fee), Riendeau must multiply the prize amounts on the ticket.

Riendeau uses conventional lottery rules to increase the prize amounts because there must be a greater prize pool as each additional player pays to play the game, since players do not want to be financially penalized by playing a shared ticket. Since each player pays the same to play a shared ticket, and there will be fewer prizes per player (since they all play the same game board), each prize is naturally a multiple of the number of players playing.

The reasons that Riendeau uses to multiply the prizes at the nodes of the ticket based on the number of players sharing the same ticket do not apply to Applicant's bonus round, as described below, so there could be no suggestion to multiply Applicant's base awards by a multiplier based on the number of players.

In Applicant's method of Claim 1, the players are not sharing the same game by taking turns and winning from a fixed pool of prizes (the players are playing independently), and

there is no economic requirement in multiplying the base prize amounts, since the players do not buy into the bonus games. Simply taking the aspect of multiplying prizes from Riendeau's disclosure (for reasons of financial necessity) and combining that aspect out of context to a slot machine tournament playing free bonus games is not suggested and there is no motivation for doing so.

In Riendeau, multiplying the prizes on the ticket is an economic necessity. In Applicant's game of Claim 4, multiplying the base prize is purely an acknowledgement of the difficulty in winning the bonus round against many players.

No one reading the cited art would be motivated to recreate Applicant's Claim 1 since the Riendeau reason for multiplying the prize amounts on the ticket is unrelated to Applicant's multiplying the base awards. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the examiner is using impermissible hindsight in concluding that the combination suggests Claim 4 (now Claim 1). It is respectfully submitted that all dependent claims are also allowable for at least the reasons for why Claim 1 is allowable.

Independent Claim 7 multiplies the base award from the bonus games based upon players' rankings. Claim 7 recites that "the players being ranked at and end of the bonus round relative to one another." To reject Claim 7, the examiner combined Webb, Cannon, and Updike (US 2002/0155884). It is conceded that slot machine tournaments are prior art.

In Updike, a player issues a bet statement, such as "Madonna will win the Grammy award," along with issuing a risk percentage (e.g., 60%) of the prediction happening. A second player may then bet on the event not occurring. If the second player wins, he wins an amount inversely proportional to his risk percentage (i.e., his bet multiplied by 0.6). See Abstract.

The examiner cites Updike's paragraph 0051, which describes an involved betting method where a player's bet amount can be multiplied based on a multiplier that is inverse to the perceived chances of winning. The player assigns a rank to betting options, and the player's bet is multiplied by the rank if the player wins.

Possibly the examiner performed a word search using the word "rank." However, in Updike, it is the player's ranking of the bet options and, in Claim 7, it is "the players being ranked at and end of the bonus round relative to one another." So the word "rank" in Updike is used in a manner unrelated to Applicant's use of the word "rank."

Applicant's Claim 7 multiplies a base award from bonus games based on the relative rankings of the players at the end of the bonus games. In Updike, there is no common game independently and separately played by the players, where the players themselves are ranked at the end of the bonus round, and where a multiplier is based on the player rankings. Even though Updike describes a betting game where the players' wagers are multiplied, it is very different in virtually every way from multiplying a base award from bonus games based on the relative rankings of the players at the end of the bonus games.

It is respectfully submitted that the combination of the art could not suggest Claim 7.

Accordingly, Claims 1 and 7 and their dependent claims are respectfully submitted to be allowable.

Should the Examiner have any questions, please call the undersigned at (408) 382-0480 x202.

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Respectfully submitted,

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